

OLAF METZEL

Stai zitto quando parli

21 May – 30 June 2011

In its actual Exhibition, Galleria Gentili presents new and older works by Olaf Metzel. Some of his works are the continuation of his hoary discussion about the subject „Newspaper“. Already at the end of the 80ies there were some wall works with scraps of an Italian newspaper (for example „Il balletto della crisi“, 1988; „Il messaggero“, 1989).

„Saldie“, „Veruschka“, „Dolce Vita“, „Ferie d’Agosto“, „ ’53“, „Copertina“, „Grazie“ and „Gio Ponti“ are the titles of his works of the years 2010 and 2011. You cannot leave out his political and social references, so typical of Metzel: you only have to understand, though, if we are speaking about portraits, leaflets, texts or simply about a scrap of the last two years. Metzel debates about the traditional press media, their endless flow of images and their transience – as nothing is older than yesterday’s newspaper. As a presentation, he makes use of subjects from the most different aspects of everyday life. His works are documents of the time that generally disappear immediately and quickly from our life and just finish crumpled into the paper basket. Their content, however, has kept us busy for longer than their own life.

Metzel makes these images appear in relief. By using new digital techniques, aluminium plates have been printed on both sides with different subjects. These plates have been finally deformed- curved, bent, wrinkled –, in order to give the impression of curled newspaper or advertising posters stacked on top of each other.

Thanks to the highly resistant material and by means of collage, photograph, painting and relief, new possibilities open up to him with the plastic language of images. By overlapping the single planes, the composition lets itself be abstracted and the three-dimension image lets itself be fixed as a snapshot, both as an object and, in a classical sense, as a relief.

Photograph, represented by three large size works (1993/2003), has for Metzel a similar function to the one of drawing. It is a snap or an idea and changes with the transformation into different artistic means. It can be a tumble from a skittish horse, it can be a footballer: everyday life situations that often become the starting point of important sculpture projects. The mentioned examples may recall a seascape. It is an irritating reality. Motives seem Filmstills and oblige the observer to reflect upon the image and its history. The play at the limit between film and reality continues in the image of the burning house (photo of a cinema set, shot at the Universal Studios, Hollywood).

„Ichhasseschule“ (2010) („I hate school“) speaks of the environment in a school class, that integrates, or does not integrate, the social status from rich to poor, from well educated to non-educated. If some doodled and scratched pieces of furniture are placed in a creative disorder, does something new start or do frustration and devastation rule? Here, as in other works, („Milieufragen“, 2007 – „Questions about society“) by Olaf Metzel, it is a question of pulling down and cutting, with a method

of sculpture construction, the appearance of the occasional and casual with the most efficient and precise planning, the photos referred to the moment of the place and scene. The staging and the great artfulness of the collages by Metzel, made with everyday debris, such as school desks, public convenience fixtures or newspaper pages, develops his paradoxical reliability and a huge provocation strength from the very fact that his works punctually refer to the real and effective problems of the society. He uses his knowledge and the sculpture produces the space where it is located.

Olaf Metzel took part in numberless art exhibitions in Italy. A selection: 1989 Per gli anni novanta, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea (PAC), Milan; 1998 Arte all'Arte, Associazione Arte Continua („Velodromo di Montalcino“), 2006 Human Game. Vincitori e Vinti, Stazione Leopolda, Florence 2007; STOP & GO, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin.